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THE MEANING OF THE "DOKANA"

PLUTARCH introduces his discourse "On Brotherly Love" by the following statement:¹ "The ancient models of the images of the Dioscuri the Spartans term 'δόκανα.' Now the *dokana* consists of two parallel beams joined by two others placed across them, and the common and undivided nature of the offering seems appropriately to express the brotherly love of the gods."



FIGURE 1.—VOTIVE RELIEF OF ARGENIDAS: VERONA.

In the *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 282, 5² *dokana* are described as "certain tombs in Lacedaemon." The writer derives the term from δέξασθαι, "because they received the sons of Tyndareus," and adds that they looked like open tombs.

This definition not unnaturally led Ernst Curtius³ to conjecture that the *dokana* were the doors of the shrine of the Dioscuri

¹ *De Fraternali Amore*, p. 478 A. τὰ παλαιὰ τῶν Διοσκόρων ἀφιδρύματα Σπαρτιῶται 'δόκανα' καλοῦσι· ἔστι δὲ δύο ξύλα παράλληλα δυσὶ πλαγίσις ἐπεξευγμένα, καὶ δοκεῖ τῷ φιλαδέλφῳ τῶν θεῶν οἰκεῖον εἶναι, τοῦ ἀναθήματος τὸ κοινὸν καὶ ἀδιαίρετον.

² Δόκανα: τάφοι τινὲς ἐν Λακεδαιμονίᾳ· παρὰ τὸ δέξασθαι τοὺς (*libri* τὰς) Τυνδαρίδας, φαντασίαν ἔχοντες (*libri* ἔχοντας; Petersen ἔχοντα) τάφων ἀνεωγμένων.

³ *Peloponnesos*, II, 316.⁴²

which might to ancient thought appear at once as a temple and as a grave.

The hypothesis has met with considerable opposition.¹ Nevertheless, as I shall hope to show, Curtius was quite right in recognizing the importance of the statement in the *Etymologicum* with its hint that the *dokana* might have a chthonic significance.

The *dokana* which Plutarch saw, however, could not have looked like open tombs. The erection must have resembled rather an *h* with a double crossbar, H ,² a figure which at once reminds one of the zodiacal sign of the Gemini.³

The same symbol, though with a single crossbar, is repeated (H H) on the great votive relief of Argenidas⁴ in Verona (Fig. 1) which Furtwängler⁵ assigns to some Laconian coast-city and dates tentatively in the second century B.C.

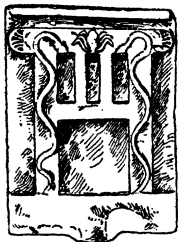


FIGURE 2.—RELIEF
IN SPARTA.

Other varieties of the *dokana* agree rather with the description in the *Etymologicum* than with the symbols on the offering of Argenidas. For example a relief of bluish marble in the Sparta Museum (Fig. 2)⁶ shows "two broad parallel vertical beams on each side of which is a snake curling upwards. These are joined at the top by a broad horizontal beam whose rounded ends overhang, and are decorated with a hand-like floral ornament: in its centre is a lotus-bud. At half their height the vertical beams are

¹ Perhaps most forcibly expressed by Bethe in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, s.v. 'Dioskuren,' p. 1089.

² Or possibly H , as on the Spartan reliefs.

³ For the various ancient forms of this sign see Bouché-Leclercq, *L'Astrologie grecque*, p. 135; Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (ed. 1882), p. 19.

⁴ The repetition of the sign may be due merely to symmetry. Perhaps the artist felt that, corresponding to the two amphorae, each brother should have his H-symbol. See W. H. Ward, *Seal-Cylinders of Western Asia*, p. 87.

⁵ Roscher, *Lexikon*, s.v. 'Dioskuren,' p. 1170. Tod and Wace, *Catalogue of the Sparta Museum*, pp. 113 ff., fig. 14, give the shape as H H . With this Welcker, *Aeschylische Trilogie*, pp. 224 f., n. 389, agrees. Rendel Harris, however, publishes in his *Cult of the Heavenly Twins* a photograph, here reproduced, evidently taken directly from the original as it bears the museum number. The relief is broken at this corner, but it seems fairly clear that the figures had no bar across the top and so Harris interprets them (p. 145).

⁶ Tod and Wace, *op. cit.* p. 193, no. 588.

joined by a narrow horizontal crossbeam. From this spring two parallel and equidistant narrow vertical beams joining the top horizontal beam either side of the lotus."

The ball-players who erected a votive relief to the Dioscuri¹ were familiar with this shape. "A tall amphora with a conical lid stands on a square base between them (the Dioscuri), while above it, and apparently resting on its handles, are the *δόκανα*. These consist of two vertical joined by two horizontal beams in the middle and at the top. The uppermost horizontal beam, which projects beyond the vertical ones, is decorated with an egg between two snakes."

Sometimes the central crossbeam could be omitted. So on terra-cotta votives found at Tarentum² the Dioscuri are represented as standing on either side of a table-like object interpreted by Petersen³ as a development of the *dokana*. I reproduce perhaps the best example (Fig. 3), showing the brethren riding in their chariot past the *dokana* on which stand two amphorae.



FIGURE 3.—TERRA-COTTA RELIEF: TARENTUM.

This shape, more than those previously discussed, resembles an open gate or doorway,⁴ and reminds one not only of the *Etymologicum* but of the *πύλαι καστορίδες* at Gythium,⁵ of the fact that a shrine of the Dioscuri was called *Θαλαμαί*,⁶ "The chambers" (?) (at Thalamae the Dioscuri were

¹ Wace, *B.S.A.* XIII, 1906-7, pp. 213 ff.

² See Petersen, 'Dioskuren in Tarent,' *Röm. Mitt.*, XV, 1900, pp. 7 f., Section A, Abb. I, 2, and II, 3, with which compare the table with altar before it and amphorae upon it in the Argenidas relief.

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 42 ff.

⁴ Professor Frothingham calls my attention to the resemblance between the *dokana* and the city-gate, comparing an urn from Volterra with the scene of the Attack on Thebes (Alinari, photo. 8734). "Here note the uprights and crossbar of the city door inside the arched gate—and, above, one of the Dioscuri heads. . . ."

⁵ Pausanias, III, 21, 9.

⁶ Cf. Photius: *Θαλάμαι· αἱ καταδύσεις· Θαλαμαί (θαλάμαι ?) δὲ τόπος ἱερὸς τῶν Διοσκούρων.*

born),¹ and that according to tradition the twins had possessed a "house" in Sparta.²

The gateway form suggests many parallels, best collected by A. B. Cook in his interesting discussion of the *dokana* in connection with Etruscan mirrors³. A sacred tree is often provided with a door-shaped shrine consisting of pillars placed on either side of the trunk and connected by an arch or epistyle.⁴

Cretan art affords many examples⁵ of shrines both of the Π variety (Fig. 4) and of a type resembling the H form of the *dokana*. They protect trees, pillars or other sacred objects, such as the "horns of consecration."

Further analogies may be drawn on the one hand from megalithic trilithons, on the other from the first gate of the temple at



FIGURE 4.—CRETAN RING WITH SHRINE.

Jerusalem described in the *Wars of the Jews* as having no doors, "for it symbolized the heavens, every way open and everywhere visible."⁶ One may compare also the gate-ways of the Indian topes or relic-shrines, for instance the north gateway of

the tope at Sānchi which is largely devoted to tree-worship.⁷

¹ Paus., III, 1, 4; 26, 2.

² Paus., III, 16, 2.

³ Zeus, *A Study in Ancient Religion*, p. 767¹.

⁴ Bötticher, *Baumkultus der Hellenen*, p. 155.

⁵ Evans, *Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult* (=J.H.S. XXI, 1901, pp. 99 ff.), figs. 53, 55, 56, 58. Cf. Evans, p. 83 (=181): "To this day the traveller in the Caucasus may see outside the Ossete houses a rude arch or gateway placed beside the stump which represents the ancestral tree of the household."

⁶ Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* V, 5, 4, translated in Fergusson, *The Temples of the Jews*, p. 151. The Talmud, *Middoth of the Mishna*, 3, 7 and 8, explains the structure of the gate: "The Gates of the propylon were forty cubits in height and twenty cubits broad, and above these were five richly carved beams of ash or oak. . . . Between each beam there was a row or course of stones. Transverse beams of cedar were carried from the wall of the Temple to this portico or propylon to support it. . . . A golden vine was spread over this gateway of the Temple, and was carried upon the supporting beams." (Translation in Fergusson, *op. cit.* pp. 151 and 152.)

⁷ Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, I, pl. 38.

Similar gate-ways are found in Korea, China, and Japan. As Fergusson explains,¹ although in India they have lost their original sepulchral meaning, in China they are still used as honorific monuments for the dead.

Suggestive of the H-type of *dokana* are the representations on Cyprian coins of the temple of Aphrodite at Paphos (Fig. 5).² Here the central portion of the edifice has the H-shape.³

Still simpler than the *dokana* as a symbolical gateway would be the erection of two pillars without the crossbar.⁴ In *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Phoenicia*, pl. XXXIII, 15, are represented the "Ambrosial Rocks" with the sacred olive-tree of the Tyrian Melkart between them. In front of the altar of Zeus Lycaeus, Pausanias saw two pillars upon which were gilded eagles.⁵ A pair of pillars wreathed with serpents enclose the busts of Tanit and Ba'al-hammân on a silver diadem from Batna in Algeria.⁶ Two large brick columns stood on either side of the gateway into the court outside the temple area of Nippur.⁷ In this connection, too, one recalls the pillars Jachin and Boaz set up by Solomon in the porch of the



FIGURE 5.—COIN OF CYPRUS.

¹ *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, II, p. 476.

² Daremberg et Saglio, s.v. 'Aphrodite,' fig. 361. A simpler type appears on a bronze coin of Vespasian, *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Cyprus*, pl. XV, 4. The coin is thus described: "Temple of Aphrodite at Paphos; garland hanging above the two crossbeams; at sides, slender columns (candelabra); in front semicircular court enclosed by lattice fence; the cone has a double flat top and a star on each side."

³ Mr. A. B. Cook very courteously permits me to refer to his unpublished theory that such gateways or arches as the *dokana* seem to represent "at first denoted the sky itself resting on its side-supports." The *dokana* "are seen to be simply the 'beams' of the world—its pillars and ceiling." Such an hypothesis would explain shape Π , but not shape H where the side posts are higher than the central bar.

⁴ When the sacred pillars had become deified, the actual gateway shape, H , may have seemed more appropriate than this simpler form as the symbol of the Dioscuri, because, as Plutarch points out, the crossbeam would emphasize the close connection between the twins. See Usener in *Strena Helbigiana*, p. 319.

⁵ Paus., VIII, 38, 7.

⁶ Cook, *Zeus*, pl. XXVI.

⁷ Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 624.

temple,¹ the pairs of obelisks in front of the colossi at the entrance of Egyptian temples, and the limestone obelisks placed with apotropaic purpose to right and left of the stelae at the entrance of Egyptian tombs as early as the end of the Third Dynasty.² The shrine of Aphrodite at Paphos contained free-standing columns in the side-wings. Of similar construction was the dove-shrine represented on a gold plaque from Mycenae.³ A sardonyx in Berlin shows two pillars, each surmounted by a globe with a star above it. Between them is a tripod with a crescent over it, and on each pillar hang a sword and lance.⁴ At Edessa twin pillars represented the assessors of Helios.⁵ Finally one may mention the pillars set up by Tiberius at Antioch before the temple of Dionysus in honor of the twins Zethus and Amphiion.⁶

Sometimes sacred posts are connected, though not by an actual crossbeam, in such a way as to suggest the *dokana*. On bronze Oscan coins of Capua stand two sacred stones with a fillet above.⁷ The coins of Magnesia on the Maeander show two conical stones wound with snakes which incline toward one another in the space between and hold a garland.⁸ Here also belong various gems, such as the chalcedony scaraboid figured by Furtwängler⁹ showing two pillars connected by a loosely hanging garland.

If the interpretation of the *dokana* implied in the foregoing paragraphs is correct, the Dioscuri at an early stage of their

¹ I *Kings*, VII, 21.

² Maspero, *Manual of Egyptian Archaeology* (1914), pp. 121 f. Of the tomb-obelisks Maspero says: (They) "were regarded as possessing magic powers that enabled them to protect the building before which they were placed from all evil. . . ."

³ Cf. also on Carthaginian stelae the obelisk flanked by two smaller pillars, sacred to Tanit. Evans, *Tree and Pillar Cult*, fig. 22.

⁴ Furtwängler, *Die antiken Gemmen*, pl. XXIX, 44. In all these examples, beside the thought of a symbolical gateway, considerations of symmetry were doubtless influential.

⁵ According to Harris, *Boanerges*, ch. 24 and *Dioscuri in Christian Legends*, ch. 2. Cf. the twin phalli said to have been erected by Dionysus in the vestibule of the temple at Hierapolis, Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 16 and 28.

⁶ John Malalas (*Corpus Scrip. Hist. Byz.*, Vol. XIV, Bonn, 1831) Bk. 10, V, 99 B.

⁷ *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Italy*, p. 83, no. 15.

⁸ Usener, *Strena Helbigiana*, p. 319; Imhoof-Blumer, *Choix de monnaies grecques*, pl. IV, no. 123.

⁹ Furtwängler, *Ant. Gem.*, I, pl. XIII, 29; cf. *Id. Beschreibung der geschnittenen Steinen im Antiquarium*, Nos. 6464, pl. 45, and 305, pl. 6.

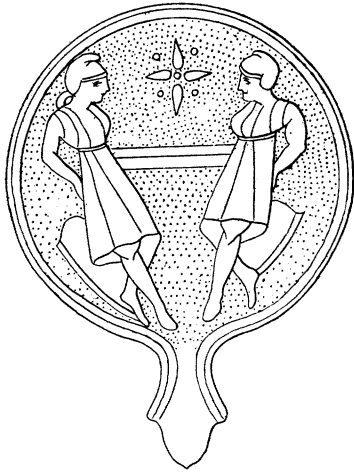


FIGURE 6.—DIOSCURI JOINED BY ONE BAR.

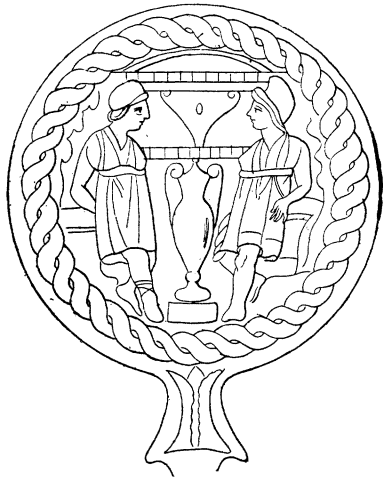


FIGURE 7.—DIOSCURI JOINED BY TWO BARS.

complicated development were the uprights of a sacred door or gateway. This hypothesis receives confirmation from a series of Etruscan mirrors on which the Dioscouri appear in human form, but so connected by crossbars as to represent each of the three main types of the *dokana*, H, Π, and H. Out of a great number of examples, I reproduce one of each class (Figs. 6, 7, and 8). Fig. 8 is particularly interesting, as it presents the twins leaning upon the sacred posts from which they were developed.

That the Dioscouri were parallel posts, guardians of some shrine, sacred tree, or pillar, explains their subordinate character,—the fact that they are often merely assessors to a more important deity or deities.



FIGURE 8.—DIOSCURI WITH HEADS JOINED BY BAR.

It explains too their frequent use at the entrances of temples¹ and at city gates.

The nature of the central deity to whom the twin gods² were assessors can also be determined. Several mirrors present evidence of the cult of a sacred plant in connection with the Dioscuri. In Gerhard's *Etruskische Spiegel*, pl. 48, 4 and 5, the brothers stand in their usual stiff position, forming supporters for the central feature, a highly simplified and conventionalized plant. Between the twins of pl. 46, 8 rises a curious palm-like stalk on top of which perches a small bird. A pediment with a star in the middle connects the heads of the twins and below this are two larger stars. On pl. 47, 1, the Dioscuri lean against their ancient pillars, with their shields behind them. Between the pillars grows a low plant naturalistically rendered by the artist. Above are two parallel *dokana*-beams and the space between them is decorated with a pattern perhaps derived from the sacred plant.

In connection with this evidence, mention should be made of late coins from Gythium showing a tree between the Dioscuri,³ of the plane-tree in Sparta consecrated to Helen by the inscription: σέβου μ' Ἑλένας φυτὸν εἰμί⁴, and of Helen Dendritis, worshipped in Rhodes.⁵

Intermediate between a sacred tree and a sacred pillar is the lotus-column which rises between its assessors on pl. 46, 9. On pl. 46, 4 a pillar supports the table-like crossbeams of the *dokana*. The thighs of the Dioscuri are joined by the crossbeams in pl. 253A, no. 3. Upon the beams rests a banded column and upon that again a pediment.⁶

Various coins offer comparisons. On a coin issued at Sagalassus in Caracalla's reign,⁷ the two circular altars of the Dioscuri,

¹ Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXIV, 79; Suetonius *Caligula*, 22; Dio Cassius, LIX, 28, and compare the twins Tammuz and Gishzida who keep the gates of the Babylonian heaven, Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 546 ff. The Dioscuri were found in front of the temple in the forum of Assisi. As guardians of gateways, they appeared on the jambs of the city gate at Thessalonica; they flank Jupiter over the Porta Marzia at Perugia, Frothingham, *Roman Cities in Italy and Dalmatia*, pp. 137, 182.

² Not necessarily the Dioscuri, but of similar character.

³ *J.H.S.* VII, 1886, p. 66 (Geta).

⁴ Theocritus, XVIII, 48.

⁵ Paus., III, 19, 10.

⁶ Cf. also pl. 253A, no. 2.

⁷ *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Lycia, Pamphylia and Pisidia*, p. 243, no. 20 and cf. nos. 23 and 24.

each adorned with a crescent and surmounted by a star, stand under an arch supported by columns. Between them rises a tall Corinthian column on a base.

It is not a far cry from this tree-pillar to the pillar-like goddess who often appears between twin supporters.¹ So on a gable-topped stele in the museum at Sparta² a female figure clad in a long, stiff chiton stands facing the spectator. "On her head she wears a kind of basket, broader at the top than the bottom, and decorated with horizontal lines." In each hand she holds a fillet wreath. Flanking her stand the Dioscuri in profile, each wearing pileus and chlamys. Coins of Acalissus³ figure a like idol, veiled, with a crescent on her head, standing between the Dioscuri who are armed with spears and accompanied by their horses. In another instance⁴ a crescent alone appears between the twins whose pilei are surmounted by stars.

The goddess between the twin supporters is a lady of many names. Worshipped at Sparta as Helen, adored under the name of Cybele at Pergamum, Pessinus, Metroon in Bithynia, Tomi, and Callatis,⁵ she appears at Tripolis in Phoenicia and elsewhere as Astarte, "queen of the heavens."⁶ Twins also escort Hera Urania seated on her lion.⁷ Here perhaps belongs the curious passage in Apuleius's description of the mime representing the Judgment of Paris where the Dioscuri are the companions of Juno.⁸

But twins were also, as Harris has proved,⁹ universally regarded as Sons of Thunder, and they became therefore naturally

¹ Most of the examples are given by Petersen, 'Dioskuren auf Monte Cavallo,' *Röm. Mitt.* XV, 1900, pp. 337 f.

² Tod and Wace, *Catalogue*, no. 201, and cf. 202 and 203.

³ *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Lycia*, etc., p. 40, 1 (Gordian III); cf. p. 211 for similar coins of Codrula (Caracalla). For Ternessus Major, cf. p. 270, no. 24 (Antonines).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234, 1, a coin of Pednelissus (Antoninus Pius).

⁵ Graillot, 'Les dieux tout-puissants Cybèle et Attis,' *R. Arch.* 1904, 1, pp. 345 ff.

⁶ *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Phoenicia*, 213, 215, 218 f. The twins and Astarte are found also in Orthosia (Caria), Berytus, Tyre, Laodicea (Phrygia), Aelia Capitolina (Judea), and Philadelphia. See Lajard, *Recherches sur le culte de Mithra*, pp. 627 ff. Of course there were other reasons for the association of the Dioscuri and similar twins with deities like Astarte. I argue only that one reason for such a combination may be found in my interpretation of the *dokana*.

⁷ Furtwängler, *Ant. Gemmen*, pl. LXV, no. 54, and vol. II, p. 303; Graillot, *l.c.*, p. 347.

⁸ Apuleius, *Metam.* X, 31.

⁹ *Boanerges*, *passim*.

assessors of thundering Jove. They guarded the entrance of the temple of Jupiter Tonans at Rome¹; on a paste of late Roman work² they flank the figure of Zeus who leans against the pillar which in more primitive days had itself received worship; they are found with Zeus Sabazius in Phrygia,³ with Ba'al-šamin, Lord of Heaven, at Setif in Africa⁴; their caps represent them beside the figure of Zeus Adad.⁵

That the connection between the goddess and her twin guardians and the god with his assessors was not remote we may infer from coins representing an androgynous Zeus apparently worshipped in Caria.⁶ His emblem, the double axe, carries us back again to Crete and reminds us that⁷ "on the reverse of the coins of Tenedos, as on so many Carian types, the old double axe form of the divinity is still preserved, while on the obverse appears its anthropomorphic equivalent in the shape of a janiform head, which has been identified with Dionysus and Ariadne."⁸ On some of these coins the pilei of the Dioscuri appear with the axe.⁹

Here I think I can add another to Harris's series of reasons for associating the twins with the thunder-god. I have tried to adduce evidence that such a symbol as the *dokana* proves the Dioscuri and similar pairs to have been the posts of a sacred doorway. Now

¹ *R. Num.*, 1838, p. 13.

² Cook, *Zeus*, p. 35⁶, fig. 8.

³ *Zeus*, pl. XXVII.

⁴ *C.I.L.* VIII, 8443, 8444, 8451, 8453; Graillet, *l.c.* p. 347. On coins of Tarsus the Dioscuri or similar figures support a canopy covering the pyre of Sandan, *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, p. 221, no. 293. Cf. Milani, *Studi e Materiali*, II, p. 56, fig. 213a and b; I, p. 48, figs. 16, 17. The arch here doubtless represents the vault of heaven (so Milani, p. 49, and cf. Cook's theory, p. 5, note 2.)

⁵ Cook, *Zeus*, fig. 451.

⁶ Cf. Foucart, *Des associations religieuses chez les Grecs*, p. 106 f. on a coin of Mylasa of the time of Geta, representing Zeus Labraundos in a tetrastyle temple: "Il est barbu et coiffé du modius; son corps se termine par une gaine couverte de bandelettes, au-dessus desquelles on voit deux mamelles; de ses bras descendent des chaînes qui paraissent scellées dans le sol; comme d'ordinaire, la main droite tient une bipenne, et la gauche une haste."

⁷ Evans, *Tree and Pillar Cult*, p. 10.

⁸ In the Orphic Hymn, frg. 238, 5, Zeus is called μητροπάτωρ. On a vase from Vulci (*Mon. dell' Inst.* VIII, p. 24) he bears an androgynous sceptre. See Usener, *Strena Helbigiana*, p. 329; *Num. Chron.*, 1887, pl. II, no. 25.

⁹ *Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Troas, Aeolis, and Lesbos*, p. 93, nos. 25, 26, 29; and Imhoof-Blumer, *Monn. gr.*, p. 269, nos. 206 and 203.

the thunder-stone, celt, or double axe, being very important as a charm against lightning, is often placed at the door of a dwelling. So Blinkenberg¹ tells us that in Snedsted parish, Denmark, thunder-stones are still placed in stable-windows and over stable-doors. While in East Prussia they are hurled against the door to keep off thunder, in Poland they are laid under the threshold and in Scotland over the door for good luck.² The Slavs call stone axes sky-arrows,³ and in this connection it is interesting to note that on one side of a bone arrow-head from Vimose the swastika and the figure H are carved.⁴ That the axe-symbol was used in very ancient days in association with the door, the great prehistoric palace at Cnossus proves. Evans says of it⁵: "It was itself the 'House of the Double Axe,' and the Palace was at the same time a sanctuary. The chief corner-stones and door-jambs, made of huge gypsum blocks, are incised with the double axe sign, implying consecration to the Cretan Zeus." One of the Etruscan mirrors (Fig. 9) illustrates the worship of the thunderbolt with the twins as its assessors. The interpretation of this mirror I owe to Cook.⁶



FIGURE 9.—DIOSCURI AND THUNDERBOLT.

Perhaps a trace of the ancient belief in the effectiveness of twins as guardians of dwellings is evinced in the selection at Athens of a common priest for the *Anakes* and the hero *Epitēgios* ("protector of the house-roof"?).⁷

But if the structure of the *dokana* was derived from a sacred gateway, why to the writer of the definition in the *Etymologicum*

¹ *The Thunder-Weapon in Religion and Folklore*, p. 74.

² Blinkenberg, pp. 96 ff.

³ Blinkenberg, p. 100.

⁴ Blinkenberg, p. 85.

⁵ *Tree and Pillar Cult*, p. 12.

⁶ *Zeus*, p. 770.

⁷ *C.I.A.*, III, 290; cf. 195, and Pauly-Wissowa, s. v. 'Epitēgios.'

had it a chthonic significance, so that it suggested open tombs?¹

The tomb of Adonis at Byblos, of Aphrodite at Paphos, of Zeus in Crete, the omphalos at Delphi, which became the tomb of Dionysus, are all proofs of the transition in popular belief by which the aniconic image of a god became his burial-place.²

An image shaped like a gateway, however, was particularly likely to be connected with the underworld. We have already seen the use of the gate in China as an honorific monument to the dead. In ancient fancy, the doorway of the house was the boundary between the safe, firelit world of home and the vague "Outside" where spirits lurked.³

The Greeks, believing that "white thorn or buckthorn fastened to a door had power . . . to exclude spirits,"⁴ hung branches before the doors when the dead received sacrifice. Pythagoras recommended the hanging of sea-leeks over the door *contra malorum medicamentorum introitum*.⁵ To exclude *striges* threshold and doorposts must be struck three times with arbute-branches and the entrance sprinkled with water.⁶

¹ The use of the plural *τάφου* is noteworthy. Unless we suppose that the duplication Η Η which occurs on the relief of Argenidas was common in Laconia, an idea contradicted by the other reliefs on which the *dokana* appears, I think we must assume the definition to describe not any one particular structure, for instance near Therapne as Bethe suggests (Pauly-Wissowa s.v. 'Dioskuren,' §9), but symbols commonly to be seen in Lacedaemon, *ἀφιδούματα* of an original, as Plutarch tells us. In favor of the duplication might perhaps be cited the passage (V. 75) in which Herodotus remarks that one of the Tyndarids and one king must be left behind when the army marches forth from Sparta. It is of course possible as Dr. Paton suggests to me, that the "tomb" or underground dwelling of the Dioscuri at Therapne may have had the form of the *dokana*. As, however, the evidence I have previously given has, I hope, shown that the origins of the *dokana* must be sought in the sacred door or gateway whose sideposts are the Dioscuri themselves, we must, if Dr. Paton's conjecture be correct, carry our question one step further back, and ask: "Why at Therapne had this sacred door or gateway a chthonic significance so that it could be described as the tomb of the Dioscuri?"

² Evans, *Tree and Pillar Cult*, pp. 21 ff.

³ See M. B. Ogle, 'House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore,' *A.J. Ph.* XXXII, 1911, pp. 251 ff. Cf. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, XI, pp. 175 f. In Borneo after a funeral, the mourners creep through a "gate" made of a V-shaped stick to rid themselves of the ghost. Meanwhile they say a few words to a cross which has been erected near the "gate." This cross they call "the wall which separates the living from the dead."

⁴ Frazer, *Golden Bough*, II, p. 191.

⁵ Pliny, *N. H.*, XX, 101; cf. XXX, 82, and see Ogle, *op. cit.*, for many additional references.

⁶ Ovid, *Fasti*, VI, 155 ff.

In Jerusalem evil spirits haunt "the threshold of the house, and indeed all doorways and entrances."¹ According to German belief, a door must not be slammed, "*denn das würde dem Geiste, der dazw. sitzt wehe tun.*"² In the Asturias it is not right to slam doors or windows for fear of disturbing some soul doing penance which might tarry there. Care too must be taken in throwing water from the door, for fear of drenching the spirits hovering near by. In upper Franconia one must not step on the threshold of a new house, because the act hurts the "poor souls" beneath. To cure fever in the Upper Palatinate, a magician lifted the threshold and banished the spirit hiding under it.³

Often it is considered unlucky to step on a threshold.⁴ "He who strikes his foot against the threshold should turn back" says the Pythagorean precept.⁵ So the Roman bride was lifted over the threshold of her new dwelling and required to smear the doorposts with oil and fat and bind them with woolen fillets.⁶ At Erdély in Hungary the mother spits upon the newborn child to protect it when she carries it across the threshold.

In fact the door or gate is a dangerous spot. Among certain African tribes,⁷ "to stand upright in the doorway or inside is unlucky, and will bring cattle thieves." At the other end of the world, in Worcestershire, "to say goodbye at a gate foretells that you will be parted from your friend. To go back over your doorstep for anything forgotten is unlucky; you should sit down to break the spell."⁸

¹ A. Goodrich-Freer, 'Powers of Evil in Jerusalem,' *Folklore*, XVIII, 1907 p. 58.

² Samter, *Geburt, Hochzeit und Tod*, p. 141. The following references are also taken from Samter, *l.c.*

³ Many classical cures are connected with the threshold. To cure *porrigo*, e.g., the patient is to stand on the threshold to take his medicine, '*idque triduo faciat*,' Marcellus Empiricus, IV, 27. Cf. Ps. Apul. *de medic. herb.*, 7, where, as Ogle remarks, the presence of spirits at the threshold is indicated by the warning "Look not behind you."

⁴ H. C. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, pp. 10 ff., contains numerous examples.

⁵ *Frg. Gr. Phil.* (Mullach) I, p. 510.

⁶ The Hindoo bride must step across, not *on*, the threshold. The custom, as Trumbull shows (*Covenant*, pp. 37 ff.), is widespread.

⁷ Review of M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk: Their Language and Folklore*, in *Folklore*, XXIII, 1912, p. 401.

⁸ S. O. Addy, 'Scraps of English Folklore, III (Worcestershire),' *Folklore*, XX, 1909, p. 346.

Often the perilous boundary must be avoided at any cost. Diarmuid O'Duibhne was forbidden to pass through a wicket-gate and leaped over rather than break his *geasa*.¹ An interesting parallel is the tale of the Marquesan chief who with all his family "scorned to pass a gateway which is ever closed, or a house with a door. . . . Often have I seen him walk the whole length of our barrier, in preference to passing between our watercasks; and at the risk of his life scramble over the loose stones of a wall, rather than go through the gateway."²

Sometimes men try by a clever deception to avoid the undesired presence of the dead about the door. One such invention was the "corpse-door," a special opening made through the wall, just large enough to admit the passage of a coffin. As soon as the procession had started for church, this opening was bricked up to prevent the spirit of the dead from finding its way back to the house.³ This curious custom is widespread. It was practiced by the Ojibway Indians; it appears in Swabia, Iceland, Greenland, Denmark, Italy, among the Slavs in Russia, among the Siamese, East Indians, Chinese, Hottentots, and Caribees.

On the other hand, a man falsely declared to have died in a foreign land, says Plutarch,⁴ must not on his return home enter through the door, but through the roof.

The thunder-stone, or the axe which represented it, was not only a charm against lightning but a protection against invading ghosts. In Masuria in East Prussia, at the boundary of a peasant's dwelling toward the street, two axes were laid cross-wise and over these the corpse must be carried. Elsewhere in Masuria an axe was laid for a similar purpose on the threshold. In China men beat on the ground with a hammer to drive away spirits.⁵ Trolls and nightmare are avoided by the use of the thunder-stone.⁶ One recalls also the three guardians who protected mother and newborn child from Silvanus by patrolling

¹ E. Hull, 'Old Irish Tabus,' *Folklore*, XII, 1901, p. 61.

² D. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise made to the Pacific Ocean*, II, 65, quoted by Frazer, *Golden Bough*, III, 254 f.

³ H. F. Feilberg, 'The Corpse-Door: A Danish Survival,' *Folklore*, XVIII, 1907, pp. 364 ff.; see *Threshold Covenant*, pp. 23 ff.

⁴ *Quaestiones Romanae*, 5. In primitive Scandinavia the inmates of the house of an enemy must be attacked through the roof, not through the door, *Threshold Covenant*, p. 7.

⁵ Samter, *op. cit.* p. 45.

⁶ Blinkenberg, *op. cit.* p. 122.

the house at night, beating on the threshold with axe and pestle and sweeping it with a broom.¹

If then a gate or doorway was regarded as actually the abiding-place of the spirits of the dead, the sacred symbols representing such an entrance might naturally be associated with the underworld.²

In conclusion I should like, in view of my hypothesis concerning the *dokana*, to discuss a few possible parallels.

Horatius, in expiation of the murder of his sister, was led beneath the *tigillum sororium*. The analogy between this structure and the *dokana* has been already noted.³ Most writers describe it as a single beam supported on either side by the street walls,⁴ although Festus (p. 297) speaks of its construction as *duo tigilla tertio superiecto*. At any rate it served the purpose of a gateway, for beneath it Horatius was driven as a symbolical offering to the shades below.⁵

I may quote a parallel from the Middle Ages, probably referring to an ordeal. "The suspected person was to swallow a mouthful of consecrated bread. If he could not do so, he was to be *dragged out alive under the doorstep* and then put to death."⁶

¹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, 6, 9.

² Perhaps a modern representative of the *dokana* exists in the lich-gate of an English churchyard, through which the corpse must be carried. I owe this suggestion to Professor Neilson of Mt. Holyoke College.

³ Cook, *Zeus*, p. 767¹.

⁴ Livy, I, 26; Dion. Hal. III, 22; Schol. Bob. ad Cic. pro Milone, 3, p. 277, Orelli.

⁵ According to Fowler, *Cl. R.* 1913, pp. 48-51, and Frazer, *Golden Bough*, XI, pp. 193 ff., the object of the ceremony was to cleanse Horatius of guilt and to enable him to escape the ghost of his sister, just as in their view the passage of a conquered enemy beneath the *iugum* was intended "to rid the foe of some uncanny powers," or meant as a kindness, to enable him to escape the angry ghosts of slaughtered Romans. Is it not much more probable that the ceremony represents a symbolical death or deliverance to the world of ghosts, whereas in older, more cruel days an actual execution was the only fate of captive or murderer? Compare the *devotio*, involving the burial of an image of the devoted person in case he did not fall in battle. As to the triumphal arch, I should agree with Frazer and Fowler that the passage beneath it was intended to rid conquering troops of the ghosts of foemen. In that case the arch faces the other way, as it were, to the world of the living, from the world of the dead. The *porta triumphalis* at Rome is, moreover, apparently the only instance in point, as most so-called "triumphal arches" were not erected as part of a triumph. Cf. Curtis, 'Roman Monumental Arches,' *Supplementary Papers of the American School in Rome*, II, p. 29.

⁶ Feilberg, *l.c.* p. 373.

Beneath the *tigillum* were erected the altars of *Janus Curiatius* and *Juno Sororia*. So at many a gate was to be seen the image of Janus set up between the posts. We have noted the double "thunder-axe" in the same position and at times in its place a double-headed, double-sexed image. Have we not here the explanation of the two heads of Janus?¹

Under the *tigillum*, however, in lieu of the two-headed god appeared his altar with that of his other (perhaps not better (!)) half, his "sister" Juno.² Cook³ connects the *tigillum*, provided with its two side-posts and its horizontal bar, with the triple-headed Janus.⁴ More natural would be the derivation of such a triple deity from the original thunder-god and his twin supporters, raised at last to virtual equality with the greater divinity. Compare Cautes and Cautopates, the twin torch-bearers of Mithras, whose names are also found as mere epithets of the greater god worshipped as Mithras *triplasios*.⁵

¹ Since completing this paper, I note that Milani, *Studi e Materiali di Archeologia e Numismatica*, I, pt. 2, pp. 197 ff. has also conjectured the derivation of Janus from the double axe.

² The fact that the double axe, though originally regarded as androgynous, had come to be considered especially the symbol of the thunder-god would lead to the duplication of the male element. Perhaps we may see a similar emphasis on the female half of the combination in the double female heads on coins of Rhegium (*Brit. Mus. Catal. of Coins, Italy*, pp. 381 f., Nos. 89-94). For other examples cf. Lampsacus (*ibid. Mysia*, pp. 79 f., nos. 10-22; pl. XVIII, nos. 9-12; pp. 82 f., nos. 32-45, 50-2; pl. XIX, nos. 10, 13) and Athens (*ibid. Attica*, p. 5). See also the *as* of Thessalonica (*ibid. Macedonia*, p. 112, *Thessalonica*, no. 32) after 88 B.C., on the obverse of which appears the head of Janus, while the reverse is occupied by the Dioscuri on horseback. In connection with Juno Sororia, the association of the Dioscuri with Juturna, wife of Janus, should not be forgotten, Arnobius, *adv. nat.* III, 29. The gate-shrine once established for the axe-god who was also the sky- or thunder-god, may have been specially perpetuated because some of its forms suggested the arch of heaven.

³ *Cl. R.* 1904, p. 369.

⁴ Represented e.g. on a "middle brass of Hadrian." Cook, *l.c.*

⁵ Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, p. 208. Cf. the visit of the three angels to Abraham (*Genesis* 18), a story which Harris has shown to be full of "Dioscuric" features. One wonders in fact whether the triplets of the *tigillum*-story may not originally have been twins. An interesting feature of the legend concerns the close relationship of the contending parties. Dionysius, III, 13 and Zonaras, VII, 6, report that the mothers of the triplets were twin sisters. Columella's account, III, 8, 1 (*eximiae fecunditatis Albanas Curiatiae familiae trigeminorum matres*) would imply a tradition deriving both families from Alba.

To Harris's investigations we owe the proof of the interest of the Heavenly Twins in ploughs and yokes.¹ Even without the tale of the *Tigillum* we should suspect a relation between the *dokana* and the *iugum* beneath which conquered troops passed.²

Not only at gates and doors but at crossroads men feared the spirits of the dead. In Greece an offering for the soul was made at crossroads³; in Germany, when the funeral arrived at a crossroad, a heap of straw was laid down that the dead when he returned might rest there.⁴ In German East Africa "lost spirits" receive sacrifice at crossroads⁵; elsewhere in Africa twins are buried at crossroads, "like . . . a man struck by lightning."⁶ To deceive the dead the implements which he used are broken at the crossroads to hinder his return. In the Middle Ages, one called upon the devil at crossroads, and evil spirits were there most likely to be met.⁷ Can we find at crossroads any structure analogous to the *dokana*?

Since in this paper I prefer to avoid the vexed question of a possible connection between the Dioscuri and the Lares, to which at some time I hope to devote a separate discussion, I should like merely to make, without drawing inferences, the following statements:

I. The *Tigillum Sororium* was placed over or near a crossroad, for the calendar of the Arval Brothers describes it as *ad com-pitum Acili*.

II. Diana, worshipped at crossroads, is, like Juno and Juturna, a feminine counterpart of Janus.⁸

III. The *compita* or shrines of the *Lares Compitales* at crossroads, are said by the scholiast on Persius (4, 28) to resemble towers, *pertusa, quia per omnes quattuor partes pateant*. Here, he explains, farmers place broken plough-yokes.

IV. The *Lares Compitales* were twins and were assessors of the Genius of the Emperor.

¹ *Boanerges*, ch. XXIII and p. 341. To the legends of warriors armed for battle with ploughshares or yokes, add an Etruscan relief on an urn in the Museum at Volterra, Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria* (Everyman Edition), II, p. 155.

² See p. 15.⁵

³ Samter, *op. cit.* p. 145; cf. Schol ad Aeschyl. Choeph. 97.

⁴ Samter, p. 145.

⁵ Samter, p. 146.

⁶ *Boanerges*, p. 97.

⁷ Maury, *La Magie et l'Astrologie dans l'Antiq. et au Moyen Âge*, p. 177.²

⁸ Cf. Cook's equation, *Cl. R.* 1904, p. 368.

V. To propitiate Tacita, mother of the Lares, an old woman places with three fingers three dabs of incense beneath the threshold.¹

I have tried to connect the sanctity of the *dokana* with the sanctity of the gateway and to show how, like the posts of the gateway, the Dioscuri or human side-posts may have stood as guardians between two worlds,—protectors of the living, companions also of the dead.

Innumerable links connect this symbol of the Heavenly Twins with other features of their worship. To such features I have been able only briefly to refer. The main interest of the *dokana* lies in the glimpse the symbol gives us of a very primitive stage in human thinking.

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¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, II, 573.